



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene

Office of Health Care Quality

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Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – Joshua M. Sharfstein, M.D., Secretary

TRANSMITTAL

TO: All Local Health Officers

FROM: Nancy Grimm, R.N., JD, Director *NBG*
Office of Health Care Quality

RE: Health Fairs and Health Awareness Testing

DATE: April 19, 2011

Throughout the state of Maryland, health fairs have become a mechanism by which educate citizens about chronic diseases and preventive health care. Many fairs offer citizens free or low cost laboratory tests to screen for possible health problems, most commonly cholesterol and glucose screening. Maryland laws and regulations governing laboratory services allow for this type of screening but do provide for some regulatory oversight. Since local health departments frequently are involved in or sponsor these fairs we wanted to make you and your staff aware of those requirements.

Laboratory tests in a mobile or health fair setting must be licensed by the Office of Health Care for Health Awareness testing. Additionally, the licensed laboratory provider must obtain a permit for each event. These permits can be obtained by contacting this office about two weeks prior to the event or fair. The event specific permit should be posted and available at each event.

Regulations for Health Awareness testing are minimal but do require some basic provisions to ensure that the tests are done correctly and that the results are provided to citizens with appropriate health counseling and education. The regulations require that instruments used to perform the tests have the required quality control and that the results are provided to the patient with recommendations for follow up care. For some types of tests such as glucose screening, the tests must be ordered by a licensed independent practitioner who will review the results with the patient. It is also anticipated that the tests will be performed in an aseptic and safe manner while utilizing appropriate Infection Control practices.

Staff of the Office of Health Care Quality periodically survey health fairs and mobile test sites to determine if they comply with the regulations and where appropriate will cite

deficiencies or impose sanctions. Additionally, staff of the Office of Health Care Quality will survey health fairs advertising health care screening. In many of these cases, the provider cannot demonstrate that they are licensed or have the required permit. They also cannot demonstrate that the necessary quality controls are being performed or that a licensed independent practitioner is available to order and interpret the test results. This results in the testing being stopped or limited.

Since the health departments often sponsor these events, we ask your support in making sure the vendors are licensed, and provide evidence of licensure, so to provide health awareness screening in a safe and responsible manner. If you have a vendor who cannot produce a license or permit, you can contact the staff of the Office of Health Care Quality at (410) 402-8090.